



GREENWOOD TREE  
ACADEMY TRUST

Coombe Road  
Puddletown  
Dorset  
DT2 8SA

Headteacher: Sharon Hunt  
Milborne St Andrew First School  
Hopsfield  
Milborne St Andrew  
Dorset  
DT11 0JE

11<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents / Carers;

**Information for all parents and carers on the importance of attendance and the attendance process.**

I am pleased to be able to provide some detail about our expectations for pupil attendance for the forthcoming academic year. Clearly, both families and schools are operating in challenging circumstances at present. We understand that you may have concerns for your child's well-being and this may influence your decision for your child's return to school. We urge you to talk to and work with us if this is the case so that we are able to work together to ensure that your child enjoys full attendance and participation in school and that you are able to be reassured for their well-being.

Milborne St Andrew First School will remain committed to ensuring the best for all our learners and are working together with parents and carers to support children and families as schools return widely in September. All schools are working hard to promote good attendance and have common systems in place to work with families when attendance drops below an acceptable level.

You will be aware of the importance of good school attendance in improving a young person's chance of success in life and establishing positive attitudes to life-long learning. There is clear evidence of the link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Of pupils who have less than 90% attendance, only 35% achieve five or more GCSEs at Grade 9 to 4 including Maths and English, but 73% of pupils who have attendance of 95% or more will achieve this.

If a child has an attendance level of 90% they will have missed one day a fortnight in school. Over a school year this will represent four weeks of absence. If this level of absence were maintained for a five year period it would mean half a school year would have been missed.

If we are concerned about your child's attendance, we will talk to you and write to explain our concerns. We will then monitor your child's attendance in the hope and expectation to see an improvement. The Dorset Council (DC) School Attendance Service may also be made aware of the school's concerns. If no improvement is made, the family may then be invited to attend an Attendance Panel.

We are determined to ensure that all our children have the opportunity to achieve success and have an excellent record of attendance. Where there is cause for concern you will be contacted and attendance closely monitored. If attendance does not improve sufficiently, you may be invited to an Attendance Meeting or Panel. This meeting is an opportunity for the school, family



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and a representative from Dorset Council's School Attendance Service to meet together to discuss why your child has such a high absence rate and seek solutions to any problems.

The Panel/Meeting can recommend several outcomes, which can include; a further period of close monitoring with specified targets for attendance; issuing a £60 Penalty Notice, a Parenting Order or seeking prosecution which could result in a fine of up to £1,000.

The attendance process is designed to identify poor attendees quickly and address the issues that are affecting their attendance. When attendance improves, monitoring will continue and, if it falls, the Attendance Process will be resumed.

Please be assured that whilst we will be sympathetic with families with genuine concerns over Covid – 19 it is expected that all children should regularly attend school.

All schools hope that the Attendance Meeting will not be needed and that all pupils will have a good record of attendance, are happy and successful and benefit from their time in school.

Yours faithfully

Sharon Hunt  
Headteacher